

STEEL PRICE CUTS

BRING FEW ORDERS

Specifications Mixed With U. S. Corporation Have Dropped Greatly.

INDEPENDENTS DISAGREE

Operations at Lower Average, but Demand Expected to Increase Next Month.

Special Despatch to The New York Herald. Pittsburgh, Feb. 26.—The break in finished steel prices is nearly forgotten because there are no orders of any consequence to keep it alive. The prices have practically stopped declining, because there is no business to make further declines. The volume of business placed at cut prices has not been greater than would have been placed if prices had not been cut, and it is perhaps, not as great. A great deal of business, however, has been shut off, as specifications mixed with the United States Steel Corporation have greatly diminished. The contracts are still in force, and that corporation has not lost customers, but the steel simply will not move.

The independents do not agree on method of procedure and the circumstances, some openly soliciting business at reduced prices, while others quote no prices and await bids, or the attitude of all is much the same—that of being willing to accept lower prices against orders of any amount of attractiveness. The traders are speculating as to the motive, as development of orders—the usual incentive—has not been forthcoming. It is said by some that the price cutting era was instituted to force the United States Steel Corporation to reduce its prices, and that the company say that they are not ready to do it. Although it cannot be said that prices are declining this week, there is no doubt in the minds of traders that they will eventually go down.

As to operations, those of the independents millers at a slightly lower average than they were last week, persons between 20 and 25 per cent of capacity, and those of the Steel Corporation have decreased sharply, falling in two weeks from an average of 90 per cent of capacity to 60 per cent this week. That rate is likely to go still lower in the next ten days, but an improvement in steel demand is expected during next month.

Resonance pig iron is regarded by furnace interests as quotable at \$2 more than basic, which makes Bessemer \$27, valley foundry from dropped to \$26, and a considerable time ago, and although that figure probably could be shaded on a fair order to make it not enough inquiry for it to make a new market, prices, therefore, are quotable at \$27, valley foundry, \$27, basic, \$26; foundry, \$28. These prices are f. o. b. valley, freight to Pittsburgh being \$1.50.

Little Coke Presses Market.

The furnace coke market has developed more stagnation this week and the foundry coke market showed a little activity. There is no real demand, there simply being no demand, due to lack of demand for pig iron, the latter being in the fullest period of its history. Nearly all the furnace coke that is sold is purchased in the Connellsville region are entirely out of blast, and of the few not actually cold some are banded and are using only enough coke to keep them from freezing. The market on heating coke seems to be about \$4. In the absence of any definite development that would justify a change in the same market prices, it is quoted that were quoted a week ago, as follows: Spot furnace, \$4.50; spot foundry, \$5.75; contract furnace, \$5.50; contract foundry, \$6.75. In much the same shape as in the Connellsville coke market, there being hardly any current demand for coal. A price of \$2.50 for mine run steam coal, and \$2.75 for better quality coal, there being sacrifice sales at less than that price. The arrival of the lake navigation season will improve the demand, but even at that a buyer's market is not expected to develop in the middle of the year.

Independent Plate Companies Report

very little business on account of price reductions, and there is no such reportage in 2.15 cents, base, Pittsburgh, and the Cambria Steel Company was able to book several odd lots totaling 300 tons for 2.25 cents, and 2.35 cents, and the latter district certain quantities. It is said that these prices are dependent on specifications, tonnage, &c. A few carload orders were taken for as much as 2.40 cents, and the Carnegie Steel Company is quoted as independent makers are quoting the old price of 2.45 cents. The United States Steel Corporation is receiving specifications at a fair rate, although new business is not being done by an independent company represented 500 tons of plates, and action on it will not be forthcoming until next month. An order for 600 tons this week specified mostly for building bridges, and the latter to build bridges. It is understood that its price was 2.25 cents, base, Pittsburgh.

Pipe Orders Are Slow.

Owing to the uncertainty created by the lower prices named awards on structural shapes have been postponed by certain independent companies. Prices as low as 2.15 cents to 2.25 cents, base, are available, according to one of the largest fabricators in this district the market on structural shapes was never so quiet before. A few small orders have been obtained on time, representing tonnages as small as fifteen tons, and the largest booked last week by one of the largest independent companies was for thirty-eight tons, coming from an independent company for export. Some leading independents have sent out representatives to see what can be done in developing business in structural work, but their requirements are fairly well met. It is not believed that much can be done until prices have reached rock bottom.

Demand for lapweld and butt welded steel pipe has picked up fairly well, although the consumer is slow in placing orders. The mills, including those of the National Tube Company, are able to maintain a rate of operation close to capacity. Makers of wrought iron pipe say that as soon as costs have been reduced lower prices will be possible, and it is understood that they will be in a position to move into profitable prices on steel pipe at an early date. A new puddling rate will be fixed about March 1 for March and April, which will determine the amount of concession to be offered. The market on inquiries is given to standard merchant pipe, although well established line companies continue to inquire for old country goods, but their requirements are fairly well met. The line are not as heavy as they have been in recent months.

The scrap market is still weaker and sales are very few. It is said that many large mills have stocks on hand and without any operation, they are not disappearing very rapidly. Heavy breakable cast has been reduced from \$18 to \$14 and No. 1 cupola cast is selling at \$22.50. Heavy melting steel continues to be quoted for \$15 to \$16, and billet and bloom crops with a low phosphorus run from \$22 to \$23.

BONDS IN STOCK EXCHANGE

RANGE OF LIBERTY BONDS.

| | | 1921. | 1920. | 1919. |
|--------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Day's sales | | \$6,250,000 | \$8,738,000 | \$5,126,000 |
| Year to date | | 502,808,000 | 652,652,000 | 528,434,000 |

RANGE OF LIBERTY BONDS.

| Closing. | Sales (in \$1,000s.) | Open. | High. | Low. | Last. | Net |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1922-47). | 180 3/4 | 91.02 | 91.08 | 91.00 | 91.08 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1927-47). | 1st cv. 4% (1927-47). | 91.02 | 91.08 | 91.00 | 91.08 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1932-47). | 14 2d 4s (1927-42). | 86.60 | 86.60 | 86.56 | 86.56 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1937-47). | 2 1st cv. 4 1/4% (1927-42). | 86.84 | 86.84 | 86.84 | 86.84 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1942-47). | 614 2d cv. 4 1/4% (1927-42). | 86.88 | 86.88 | 86.84 | 86.80 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1947-47). | 1st-5d 4 1/4% (1928). | 93.98 | 93.98 | 93.98 | 93.98 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1952-47). | 308 2d 4 1/4% (1928). | 93.98 | 93.98 | 93.98 | 93.98 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1957-47). | 2 3d cv. 4 1/4% reg. | 89.70 | 89.70 | 89.70 | 89.70 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1962-47). | 4 1st 4th 4 1/4% (1923-38). | 86.62 | 86.64 | 86.56 | 86.60 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1967-47). | 51 6th 4 1/4% reg. | 86.50 | 86.50 | 86.44 | 86.50 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1972-47). | 1,600 4 1/4% (1922-23). | 97.46 | 97.48 | 97.46 | 97.46 | + |
| U. S. 4 1/2% (1977-47). | 104 1V. 3 1/4% (1922-23). | 97.46 | 97.46 | 97.46 | 97.46 | + |